

The Cultural Characteristics of Korea's Ancient Kaya Kingdom

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Introduction

Discussions on Korea's ancient history have for the most part focused on the so-called 'Three Kingdoms era' while all but ignoring the history of Kaya. This phenomenon has largely been the result of the emergence of a Silla-based perception of history since the Koryŏ era, and of the acceptance in the modern period of distorted historical notions which have their origins in the Japanese colonial era.¹ Nevertheless, truth cannot be hidden forever. In this regard, the archaeological excavations which have recently taken place in former Kaya areas have resulted in a marked improvement in the quality of the Kaya-related studies conducted by Korean and Japanese scholars.² However, the results of these recent studies on Kaya have yet to be reflected in the work conducted in the western world.

The following are some of the characteristics of the studies on Kaya in the West as viewed through recently published textbooks and encyclopedias.³

- 1) In most textbooks, Kaya is either not alluded to at all,⁴ or only mentioned in passing.⁵ One even finds records in which references are made to Japan's conquest and colonization of the southern part

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of the Korean peninsula in the 4-6th centuries that do not contain any references to Kaya.⁶

- 2) Substantial references to Kaya are hard to come by in introductory and reference books published in the United States and England. In most cases, a neutral and careful stance towards Kaya is adopted, in that, while the Mimana theory is introduced in the section dealing with Ancient Japanese history, equal weight is also given to the horse-rider theory.⁷
- 3) Although not a widespread phenomenon, one finds some American reference books in which Kaya is blindly and seemingly without question introduced as being a colonial outpost of Japan.⁸
- 4) The above-mentioned trend has been particularly rampant in countries which have exhibited little interest in Asia such as France⁹, or in Germany, which simply incorporated all of the claims made by the Japanese during the colonial era in its textbooks.¹⁰

Such trends can be seen as the result of the lack of concrete studies on the subject of the history and culture of Kaya, or as having been caused by the failure of the few studies which have been conducted on the topic to reach the seminal point at which the generally accepted perception of history can be altered. Moreover, the development of a mature perception of Kaya history in the West has been hampered by the presence of a general academic environment in which the topics of Korean and Ancient Korean history have drawn little interest. In this regard, the main problem has been that the history of Kaya has not been raised in conjunction with ancient Korean history, but rather been negatively associated with ancient Japanese history. Although questions pertaining to Kaya's relationship to the development of ancient Japan have been raised, the general lack of knowledge about Kaya's history and culture has made it such that scholars have been unable to forge proper questions about Kaya itself.

The issue of Western scholars lack of a proper perception of Kaya is of grave concern not only because it runs the risk of fostering a misunderstanding of the relationship between ancient Korea and Japan,

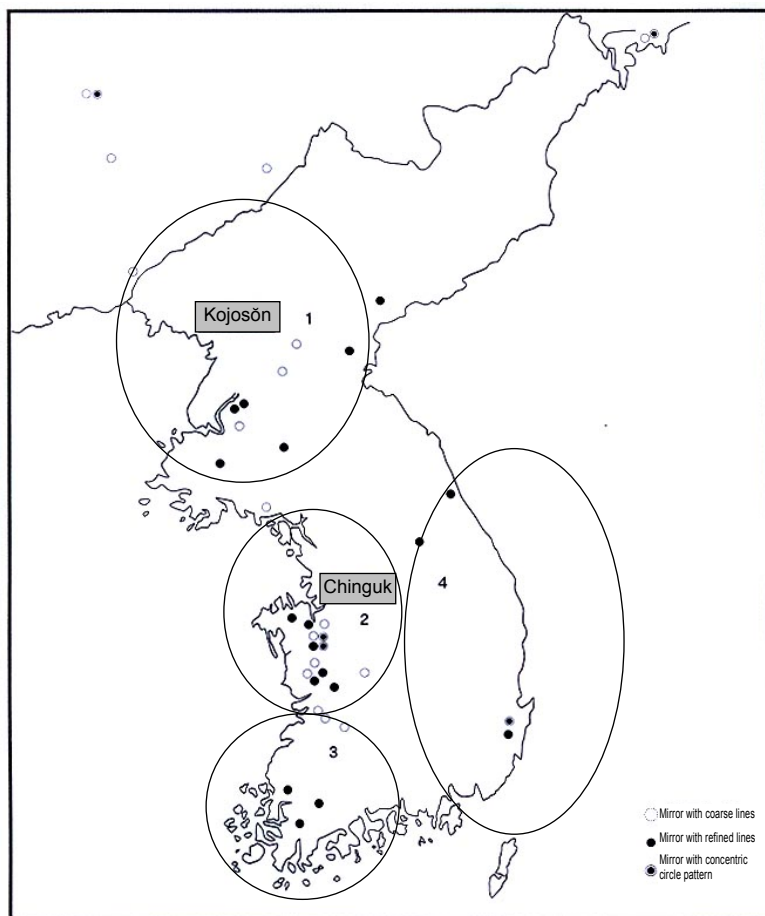
but also of creating a general misconception of the traditional relationship between Korea and Japan. With this in mind, this study attempts to present a brief introduction of the characteristics of Kaya culture. This will be carried out through a systematic review of recent excavations conducted in the Kaya area, as well as of some of the main studies on Kaya history.

Integration of Agricultural and Iron Culture

During the 3rd to 2nd century B.C., or prior to the establishment of Kaya culture, a rather significant cultural gap existed between the various regions of the Korean peninsula. As such, in the northwest region of the Korean peninsula, with the Taedong River basin serving as the center, a culture developed which was based on the *sehyŏng tonggŏm* (short and finely wrought bronze daggers), bronze spears and angular spears, as well as iron axes.¹¹ This period has been referred to as the late Kojosŏn era.¹²

In the Ch'unghnam and Chŏlla regions, a pure bronze culture devoid of any iron influence remained in place until 3rd to 2nd century B.C. The culture which developed in the Ch'unghnam area was based on the bronze culture which had its origins in the Liaoning area, and was characterized by *sehyŏng tonggŏm*, bronze mirrors with coarse patterns, shield-shaped bronze wares, fan-shaped bronze axes, and ornamental beads made of jade raw stones. Meanwhile, the culture which developed in the Chŏnbuk (northern Chŏlla) region was characterized by *sehyŏng tonggŏm* and more practical bronze spears and dagger-axes influenced by the bronze culture which emerged during the Warring States Period in China. In the Chŏnnam (southern Chŏlla) region ceremonial tools such as bronze mirrors with fine patterns and various-shaped bronze bells have been uncovered.¹³ In the section of the <*Shihchi* (史記, Historical Records)> dealing with Chosŏn, one finds a reference to the existence of the state of Chin (辰國) during the 2nd century B.C.; here, Chin can be understood to have been one of the bodies which existed within the southwestern region

of the Korean peninsula, and one which encompassed several smaller units.¹⁴ (<Picture 1>)



1. P'yŏngnam/ Hwanghae area : early stage of ancient state (Kojosŏn)
2. Ch'ungnam area: statelet confederation stage (Chinguk)
3. Chŏnnam/ Chŏnbuk area: advanced chiefdom society
4. Kyŏngnam/ Kyŏngbuk area: early chiefdom society or hierarchical stage

Source: Kim Taesik, 2002, *The 700-Year History of the Incomplete Civilization of Kaya*, Vol. 1, p. 94, Map 2-3

<Picture 1> The Korean peninsula during the early Iron Age

Conversely, in the Kyōngbuk and Kyōngnam (Northern and Southern Kyōngsang) region, an agricultural culture based on polished stone-made farming tools developed earlier on than in other areas.¹⁵ However, the tribal societies which emerged in this area proved unable to produce bronze or iron tools. As such, although this culture was unable to produce any metal tools, it was nevertheless aware that it was surrounded by more powerful statelets in the early stages of development or advanced chiefdoms which have metal culture.

While the majority of those who resided in this area were farmers that lived together on an egalitarian basis, a number of these tribes were eventually forced to come together and form what resembled the early stages of a chiefdom in order to counter and carry out exchanges with their neighbors. This process also involved the establishment of a ruling class. The wealth and power of the members of this ruling class are evidenced by the fact that they were buried in dolmen or stone coffins, and that polished stone daggers and arrowheads were buried with them.¹⁶

Meanwhile, Wiman Chosŏn, which was the early ancient states of advanced culture, used trade to establish control over its neighbors. In this regard, it traded with Chin and vast areas of Japan through the West and South Sea coasts of Korean Peninsula. As a result of this trade, some of the rulers of the various chiefdoms in Kyōngnam area who were able to construct dolmens in places such as Chindongni, Masan¹⁷ and Mugyeri and Naedong in Kimhae,¹⁸ could have expensive bronze daggers and arrowheads imported from their neighbors. However, when viewed from the standpoint of the entire Korean peninsula, the level of culture and social integration in this area remained well behind.

After the 2nd century B.C. various types of tombs began to appear in the Kimhae area. These included the two-jar coffins¹⁹ containing bronze daggers, bronze chisels and iron axes uncovered in the same area as the shell mounds in Ponghwangdong, Kimhae. Moreover, while single-jar coffins were found in Chinaedong,²⁰ wooden coffin tombs were found in Naedong which contained *sehyōng tonggōm* and black polished pottery. Meanwhile, wooden coffin tomb #70 excavated in Yangdongni²¹

contained black polished pottery. Historic relics linked to the wooden coffin tombs and the *sehyŏng tonggŏm* began to appear along the northwestern area of the Korean peninsula; however, these were simply marginal additions to the basic undecorated pottery culture which eventually developed in the area. As such, there is some doubt as to whether these bronze and iron tools were actually being produced in this area at this time.

At the end of the 2nd century B.C. (B.C. 108), Wiman Chosŏn was attacked by the forces of Emperor Wu of the Han and subsequently collapsed. As this process unfolded, refugees from Wiman Chosŏn, following the former trading routes, began to resettle along the coast. Among these refugees were members of the aristocracy, and this group is responsible for the early stage of tombs uncovered in Tahori, Changwon.

Tahori tomb #1, which appears to have been built in the latter part of the 1st century B.C., has no mound, has a pit of 278 centimeters long, 85 centimeters wide, and 205 centimeters deep. In it buried a 240-centimeter long log-type wooden coffin. Some of the articles interned in this tomb include metal tools such as *sehyŏng tonggŏm*, iron daggers, iron hand knives with loop handles, bronze spears, iron spears, flattened axes, iron sickles, cloud-patterned mirrors, bronze belt hooks, *osujŏn* coins and bronze horse bells; lacquer ware such as portable cosmetic cases, sword cases, cylindrical bowls with attached stands, square-shaped bowls with attached stands, circular lacquer ware, lids, beveled lacquer ware, brushes, and fans; as well as glass beads and shards of undecorated pottery and tile-quality pottery.²²

Chinese-style relics such as cloud-patterned mirrors, *osujŏn* coins, bronze belt hooks, bronze horse bells, glass beads, and lacquer cosmetic cases were also uncovered in the Chŏngbaektong area of Pyŏngyang and in Choyangdong, Kyŏngju. The presence of these Chinese-style remains proves that trade was actively being carried out between the people of the southern part of the Korean peninsula and Lo-lang at the time. In addition, the shape of the wooden coffin and the bronze, iron, and lacquer implements found in this area are unlike those of China and Japan, and are unique to the *sehyŏng tonggŏm* culture. (<Picture 2>) Therefore, an

advanced political body must have existed in the Changwon area along the coast of Kyōngnam during the 1st century B.C. What's more, the type of pottery which was uncovered in this area, most of which was of the brown and black undecorated pottery variety, had been prevalent in this area since the 3rd century B.C.

During the 1st century A.D. iron tools and tile-quality pottery began to appear in the Yangdongni area of Chuch'on-myōn, Kimhae. Yangdongni Tomb #52, which is representative of the tombs built during the early 1st century A.D., has a pit of 317 centimeters in length, 170 centimeters in width, 145 centimeters in depth, and buries a 235 centimeter-long wooden coffin. Inside the tomb, the following articles were found: earlier tile-quality pottery such as round-shaped jars; undecorated pottery such as jars with triangular epic decorations, shards of bowls with attached stands; iron tools such as iron axes and sickles; as well as small glass beads.²³ The remnants found in this tomb help to shed some light on how the wooden-coffin tomb and metal culture brought by those settlers who migrated to this area during the previous stage progressed as a result of its integration with the agrarian culture of the original inhabitants of the area, a culture characterized by its undecorated pottery.



Source: National Museum of Korea and Pusan Metropolitan City Museum, 1991, *Special Exhibition of Kaya Culture*, p.8, Picture 1

<Picture 2> Sehyōng tonggōm and its cover excavated from Tahori Tomb # 1

As such, the agrarian culture which developed in the south of the peninsula and the metal culture which emerged in the northwest came together in the Kimhae and Changwon areas, and then spread to the coastal areas of Kyŏngnam and the Nakdong River region. This new culture became the founding basis of Kaya culture, and as such, this can be identified as the first characteristic of Kaya culture. However, because of the cultural gap that existed between the original inhabitants of the coastal areas of Kyŏngnam and the Nakdong River region area and those who migrated to the area later on, this process of cultural integration, and the subsequent societal changes which occurred as a result of the creation of this new culture, must have taken at least 200 years to complete.

Center of Marine Trade with Lo-lang

The development of the Yŏngnam area during the 2nd to 3rd century was closely related to the culture which emerged in Lo-lang. In the Tongi section of the *Wei shu* (魏書, Book of Wei) in the <*Sanguozhi* (三國志, History of the Three Kingdoms)>, which deals with the Han (韓條), one finds a record which claims that it was customary for the common people of Han to be provided with *ũich'aek* (衣幘, a particular type of clothes and hats) whenever they went out to meet someone of a higher status; however, there were about 1,000 commoners who made their own *ũich'aek*, and *insu* (印綬, string attached to the stamp used by government officials).²⁴ This would seem to indicate that various groups which resided in the southern parts of the Korean peninsula were actively involved in trade with the neighboring Chinese Commanderies in order to receive more advanced cultural items. As a result of this trade, the cultural level of this area was upgraded in such aspects as production techniques and lifestyles.

In the Tongi section of the *Wei shu* (魏書, Book of Wei) in the <*Sanguozhi* (三國志, History of the Three Kingdoms)> dealing with Japan (倭人條)²⁵ and the <*T'aengniji* (擇里志)>²⁶ written during the late period of

Chosŏn, one finds entries which read that from the onset of the Samhan era until the latter part of Chosŏn a marine transportation route existed which started in the northwestern area of the Korean peninsula, longed the western and southern coasts of the Korean peninsula to arrive in Kimhae, which is situated in the lower reaches of the Nakdong River, before breaking up into two smaller routes, with one heading upstream into the inland areas of Kyŏngsang, and the other heading across the sea to Japan. Therefore, advanced culture and goods continued to be imported from the Lo-lang area even after Kaya culture had been established.

Yangdongni Tomb #162 in Kimhae, which has been classified as an outer-coffin tomb constructed sometime during the mid to late 2nd century, stands out as proof of the vigorous exchanges which took place between Lo-lang and Kaya during this period. Yangdongni Tomb #162 has a pit of 5 meters long, 3.4 meters wide, 1.2 meters deep, and buries a wooden outer-coffin. Two Chinese-style mirrors and seven Chinese imitation mirrors, decorative bronze belt buckle, and bronze loops, six short iron daggers, a large iron spear, ten mid-sized iron spears, sixty iron arrowheads, an iron kettle, six iron axes, three iron sickles, forty flattened axes, a mounted jar with neck, a necklace made of crystal and glass beads, and a red leather shield have been excavated from this tomb.²⁷

The person buried in this tomb, who possessed various kinds of iron weapons such as six short iron daggers which were improvements on the *Sehyŏng tonggŏm*, and a large 60-centimeter long spear, appears to have been a powerful individual. What's more, flattened axes, which were then perceived as a symbol of wealth and served as a mode of currency, had been placed on each of the four corners of his wooden coffin. These relics, which were made in Kaya, demonstrate the advanced production techniques which characterized Kaya culture. Therefore, we can surmise that the owner of Yangdongni Tomb #162 was the leader of a statelet (小國, *soguk*) which was economically and politically powerful.

In addition, many foreign relics were also uncovered in this tomb. The two Chinese bronze mirrors (<Picture 3>) and dazzling necklace made of glass beads appear to have been imported through Lo-lang. The

iron kettle (<Picture 4>) that was uncovered from this tomb, which is considered to be an example of Northern-style culture, is particularly notable in that it is similar in shape to an iron kettle excavated from Outer-coffin Tomb #53 in Chŏngbaektong, Pyŏngyang. The scope of the items excavated from this tomb, which included bronze and iron implements, pottery and jade, shares many similarities with Yangdongni Tomb #162.²⁸ Thus, this would seem to confirm that the development of the group which constructed these ancient tombs in Yangdongni was closely related to the Lo-lang culture which surfaced in northwestern Korea. During this period, Kaya, which was centered around Kimhae, was the most powerful member of the so-called Pyŏnhan Confederacy consisting of 12 statelets.²⁹ Kaya's strategic location in terms of marine transportation, as a conduit between Lo-lang and Japan, and its ability to produce a massive amount of iron, were the main reasons why it emerged as the main power in the Nakdong River area.



Source: Tongŭi University Museum, 2000, *Kimhae Yangdongni Tomb Culture*, p.53, Picture 101

<Picture 3> Chinese bronze mirrors-Yangdongni Tomb # 162, Kimhae



Source: Tongŭi University Museum, 2000, *Kimhae Yangdongni Tomb Culture*, p. 54, Picture 103

<Picture 4> Iron kettle-Yangdongni Tomb # 162, Kimhae

However, the amount of influence which Lo-lang exercised in southern Korea appears to have exhibited regional variations. In other words, while the Pyŏnhan area, with Kaya at the center, developed in the manner spelled out above during the 2nd to 3rd century, an indigenous culture which was characterized by the presence of jar coffin tombs, and of which very few remnants have been uncovered, continued to be found in the Honam region.³⁰ While this failure may be the result of the undeveloped state of excavations in this area, or that the area itself did not contain any large deposits of iron, a more fundamental reason for this phenomenon may be the checks placed on the expansion of the power of the groups in the Kyŏnggi, Ch'ungch'ŏng, and Chŏlla regions by their immediate neighbor Lo-lang.

As such, political integration in southern Korea was delayed as a result of the influence of the Four Chinese Commanderies which existed in the area formerly occupied by Kojosŏn for hundreds of years. The decline in the power of Lo-lang which began in the late 2nd century ushered in the onset of the rise of various groups in different sections of this region. However, as Kaya was geographically cut off from Lo-lang by the Sobaek mountain range and did not represent a direct threat to Lo-lang, and it was strategically situated along the marine route to Japan, Kaya was able to obtain economic gain from the former's trade with Japan. Thus, I am of the mindset that rather than trying to restrain it, Lo-lang may to a certain degree have looked favorably upon the growth of Kaya.

Kaya eagerly took advantage of this reality and took on the role³¹ of conveying the advanced Chinese culture emanating from Lo-lang to the inland areas of Kyŏngsang and Japan. Moreover, its indigenous iron-producing capacity made it possible for Kaya to exhibit more independent features.³² Thus, the fact that Kaya traded with Lo-lang more vigorously than any other region on the Korean peninsula can also be said to be one of the fundamental characteristics of its culture.

Neat and Conservative Cultural Characteristics

The tomb and pottery cultures which emerged in the Kyōngsang region during the 2nd to 3rd century were for all intent and purpose identical. This is why Korean scholars have traditionally referred to the presence of a common Chin-Pyōnhan cultural basis.³³ Recently, some scholars have begun to argue³⁴ that the tombs and pottery culture in the Kyōngsang region began to exhibit certain perceptible differences during this period. This type of academic discourse is indeed constructive. However, it is a fact that while the culture which developed in the Kyōngsang region in the 2nd to 3rd century was significantly different from that which emerged in the northern and central regions of the Korean peninsula and Japan, it is difficult to differentiate the Chinhan culture which arose along the east coast of Kyōngbuk and Kyōngnam from that of Pyōnhan in the Naktong River area. This is because these two cultures are essentially the same one, as the culture which developed in the Kyōngsang region during the 2nd to 3rd century was basically established through the fusion of the undecorated pottery culture of the south with the *Sehyōng tonggōm* culture of the northwest.

However, when viewed from the standpoint of trade with Lo-lang, the Chinhan and Pyōnhan areas exhibited differences that were based on their geopolitical locations. In other words, while Kuya (狗邪國), or Kaya, which was the main force within the Pyōnhan Confederacy, was able to carry out direct maritime trade with Lo-lang because of its location at the end of the sea route which connected the west and south coasts, Saro (斯盧國), or Silla, which was the main power within the Chinhan Confederacy and was located on the east coast where rougher seas prevailed, did not enjoy the conditions needed to become a direct stop along the maritime route.

Some scholars have advanced the possibility that Chinhan engaged in direct contact with Lo-lang through inland commercial networks that passed through places such as Choryōng or Chungnyōng. However,

although such trade may have been possible at the time, the marine routes along the southwest coast remained a much simpler option. Therefore, there is a high likelihood that Chinhan experienced Lo-lang culture secondhand through its contacts with Pyŏnhan in the Nakdong River area, which would in turn explain why the two areas were able to form the above-mentioned Chin-Pyŏnhan common cultural basis.

This Chin-Pyŏnhan common cultural basis began to show signs of breaking apart in the early 4th century when Lo-lang and the Daifang Commandery (帶方郡) were destroyed by Koguryŏ.³⁵ While the unilateral cultural standard previously set by Lo-lang disappeared, Koguryŏ soon became preoccupied with its confrontation with the Gongsun clan of the Former Yen. Therefore, the common cultural basis which had existed in the Yŏngnam region began to break apart during the early 4th century as the various powers in the region, unfettered by the presence of any stronger powers, began to struggle for supremacy.

However, the rise of Paekche during the late 4th century as the dominant power in the Han River area, its subsequent capture of the Hwanghae region formerly occupied by the Daifang Commandery, and its opening up of a marine trade route, had the effect of once again unifying Pyŏnhan, or the Kaya Confederation, to trade with this new force.³⁶ While the general periodic trends of this era characterized by a horse-riding and war-based culture were also reflected in this culture, its fundamental characteristics were deeply rooted in Lo-lang and Daifang culture. As a result of this fact that the Chin-Pyŏnhan common cultural basis formed under the influence of Lo-lang since the 2nd to 3rd century remained fundamentally unaltered, Kaya culture came to exhibit neat and conservative cultural characteristics. Although Kaya experienced a significant political upheaval following the relocation of its center to the inland Kyŏngsang area of Koryŏng which occurred sometime after the 5th century,³⁷ these basic cultural characteristics remained in place until the kingdom collapsed. This phenomenon is exemplified by Kaya pottery such as its mounted dishes, longneck jars, and pottery stands, whose shape and neat beauty remained largely unchanged.³⁸ (<Picture 5>)



Source: National Museum of Korea, 1997, *National Museum of Korea*, p. 126

<Picture 5> Kaya pottery

On the other hand, while Silla culture, like Kaya's, had its origins in the Chin-Pyŏnhan common cultural basis, it was also greatly influenced by Koguryŏ in the late 4th century. This influence was so great that it resulted in significant social changes within Silla society.³⁹ This influence can be perceived in the Silla envoy Wi Tu's dispatch to the Former Qin (前秦) with the assistance of Koguryŏ in 382. During his trip he was asked by Fu Jian (苻堅) "Why has your description of your country changed so much from what it was in the past?"⁴⁰ As such, we can see that Silla's culture, which had been based on the Chin-Pyŏnhan common cultural basis, underwent great changes from the 5th century onwards,⁴¹ with more practical yet coarse cultural attributes emerging. As a result, distinct changes in Silla pottery,⁴² such as in their mounted dishes and mounted longneck jars, began to appear, eventually resulting in a wholesale alteration of the basic shapes.⁴³ (<Picture 6>)

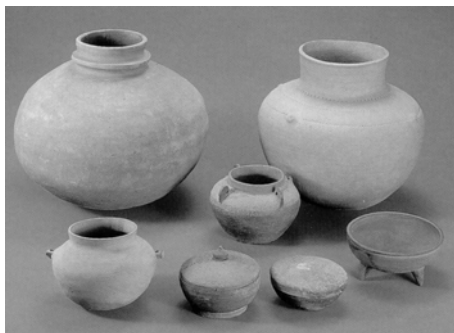


Source: National Museum of Korea, 1997, *National Museum of Korea*, p. 150

<Picture 6> Silla pottery

Meanwhile, Paekche's location within Mahan, which lay adjacent to Lo-lang, meant that its culture was influenced by the latter⁴⁴ to a much greater degree than Chinhan and Pyŏnhan culture. This influence was so great that Paekche's culture was originally indistinguishable from that of Lo-lang. However, the founders of Paekche, like Koguryŏ, had their origins in the Puyŏ tribe.⁴⁵ Moreover, the process of its becoming an ancient state was in essence the process of fighting against Lo-lang's attempts at political control. In this regard, while Paekche was strongly influenced by Lo-lang, it also accepted and improved Koguryŏ's stone-mound tomb culture.⁴⁶ Furthermore, from the 4th century onwards, Paekche began to actively accept the aristocratic culture which developed amongst China's southern dynasties, such as Eastern Jin (東晉) in the 4th century and Song (宋) and Yang (梁) from the 5th century onwards.⁴⁷ This eventually resulted in its exhibition of more refined and elegant cultural characteristics. These cultural characteristics are apparent in typical Paekche pottery, such as its three-legged vessels and double-lipped jars.⁴⁸ (<Picture 7>)

While Kaya had a great influence on the neighboring Wa culture which developed in Japan until the early 6th century,⁴⁹ the latter exhibited a tendency to ignore the practical aspects of the culture it absorbed, preferring to simply imitate cultural goods' external qualities and to



Source: National Museum of Korea, 1997, *National Museum of Korea*, p. 113

<Picture 7> Paekche pottery

exaggerate their scale. This particular phenomenon was in large part based on the fact that although Japan was densely populated as a result of its advanced agrarian culture, it remained well behind the southern region of the Korean peninsula in terms of its degree of social integration and cultural development. Moreover, etiquette and rites played a fundamental role in Japanese culture, and cultural tools were used by the rulers as a sign of their superiority over those they ruled. Thus, while Wa culture was inherently based on Kaya culture, its culture underwent fundamental changes during the transmission process and wound up exhibiting more formal and coercive cultural characteristics. This phenomenon is well exhibited in the fact that the scale of the small and practical bronze horse bells and angular bronze spears first developed by Pyŏnhan had been increased by some 50 centimeters by the time they were incorporated into Yayoi culture in the 2nd to 3rd century, with their width increased significantly as well.

In terms of pottery, while Japan's *Sueki* pottery was originally influenced by Kaya culture,⁵⁰ it eventually began to exhibit more formal and coercive features. This type of trend is also visible in the case of the Sueki pottery which was represented with holed small pots with big mouth. Wa culture was once again transformed after the 6th century under the influence of the Confucian and Buddhist art of Paekche; however, here again it only incorporated the external qualities of Paekche culture while maintaining its own formal and coercive characteristics. (<Picture 8>)



Source: The Archeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture, 1989, Introduction to Wooden Coffin Tombs, p. 15

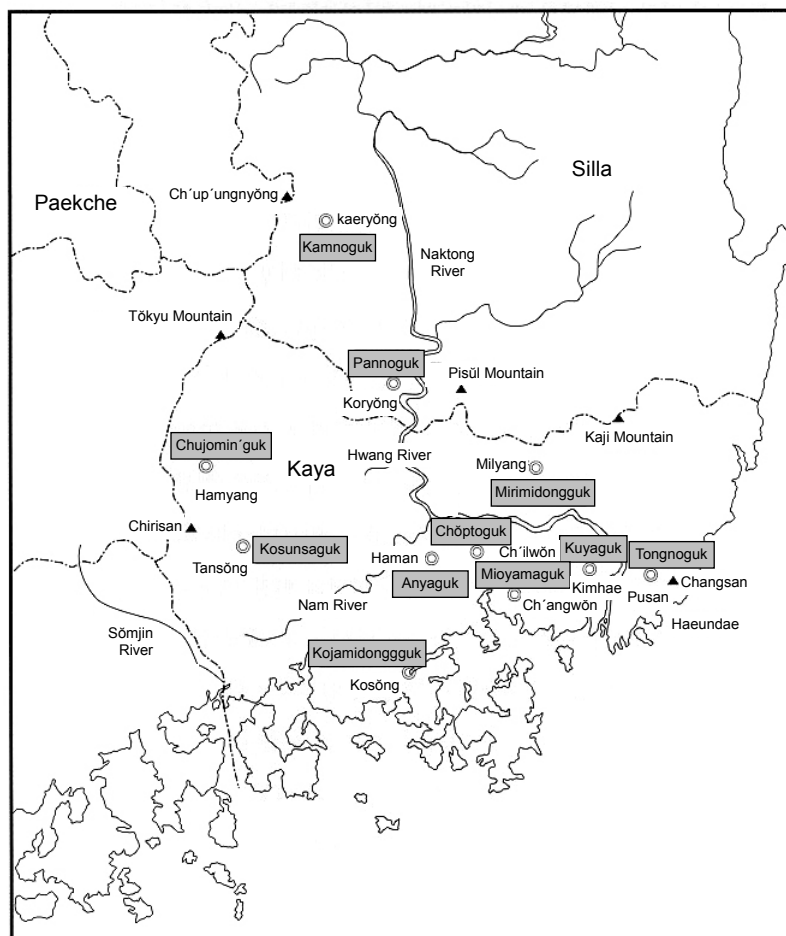
<Picture 8> Sueki excavated from the Fujinoki Tomb

As seen above, Kaya was able to maintain a culture that was unique in its own right and distinctively different from that of Silla, Paekche, and Japan from its onset until its eventual collapse. This particular feature of Kaya culture stands out as some of the most significant proof that Kaya was not subordinated to Paekche or Japan. In other words, Kaya had an original culture of its own.

Independence Maintained for Seven Centuries

While the main centers of Kaya culture were Koryŏng in the Kyŏngbuk, and the Kimhae and Haman in Kyŏngnam area lying west of the Nakdong River, the size of its territory increased and decreased over time. During the early Kaya era which continued until the early 4th century, its territory included, in addition to the above-mentioned areas, the Sŏngju and Kimch'ŏn areas lying northwest of the Nakdong River, and the Ch'angnyŏng, Yangsan and Pusan areas situated east of the Nakdong River. During this early period, Kaya culture developed in the lower reaches of the Nakdong River, with the Kimhae, Pusan, and Ch'angwŏn areas being the main centers.⁵¹ (<Picture 9>) During the later Kaya era which began after the 5th century, Kaya's territory included the Changsu, Namwŏn, and Imsil areas lying west of the Sobaek mountain range, and the Yŏsu and Kwangyang areas situated in Chŏnnam.⁵² (<Picture 10>) Within the range of this territory, one found an average of 12-13 smaller statelets which made up the Kaya Confederacy, with the number of these statelets rising as high as 22 at one point, and decreasing as low as 7-8 at another.

During the later Kaya era, the Koryŏng and Hapch'ŏn areas situated in the inland area of Kyŏngsang emerged as the main centers of Kaya culture. During this late Kaya era, individual areas within the territory of Kaya began to exhibit regional characteristics; for instance, a dominant northern Kaya culture centered around areas such as Koryŏng, Hapch'ŏn, Hamyang, and Namwŏn could be found, as could a central Kaya



North: Ch'up'ungnyông area

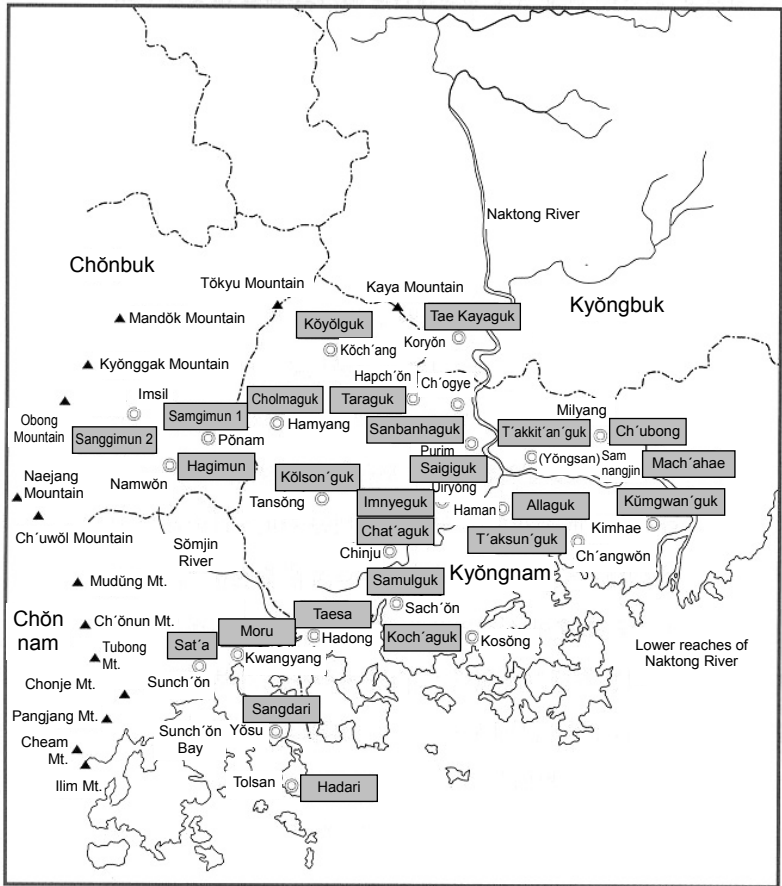
West: Chiri and Tôkyu Mountains in the Sobaek Mountain Range

South: Coastal area spanning from the lower reaches of Sômjîn River to Haeundae

East: Pisül, Kaji, and Chang Mountain

Source: Kim Taesik, 2002, *The 700-Year History of the Incomplete Civilization of Kaya*, Vol. 1, p.124, Map 2-5

<Picture 9> The range of the territory of the early Kaya Confederation



North: Kaya and Tōkyu Mountains

West: Western slope of the Honam Mountain Range

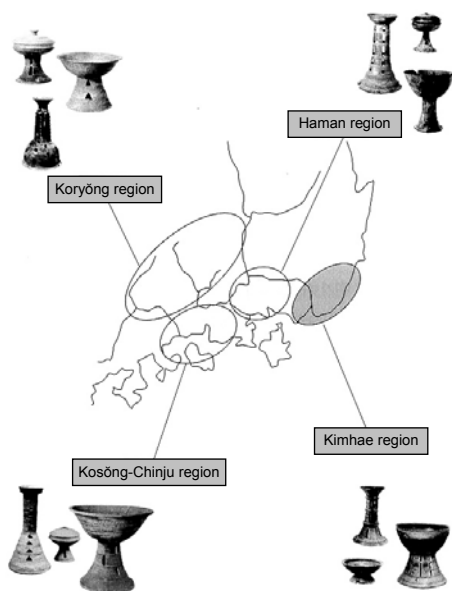
South: Coastal area spanning from Sunch'ŏn Bay to the lower reaches of the Nakdong River

East: Lower reaches of Nakdong River south of Koryŏng (Including Yōngsan in Ch'angnyŏng, east of the Nakdong River)

Source: Kim Taesik, 2002, *The 700-Year History of the Incomplete Civilization of Kaya*, Vol. 1, p. 182. Map 3-3

<Picture 10> The range of the territory of the late Kaya Confederation at its peak

culture centered around Haman and Ŭiryŏng, a southwestern Kaya culture based on the Kosŏng, Chinju, and Sach'ŏn areas, and a southeastern Kaya culture anchored in the Kimhae and Ch'angwŏn areas. However, overall, each region managed to achieve balanced development.⁵³ (<Picture 11>)



Source: National Museum of Korea, 1997, *Korean Ancient Potteries*, p. 55

<Picture 11> Division of cultural regions during the late Kaya period

Kaya culture began in the 1st century B.C. in the Kimhae and Ch'angwŏn areas of Kyŏngnam. According to historical documents such as the *Karakuk ki* (駕洛國記, The history of Kaya) section of the <*Samguk yusa*> the history of Kaya began in the 18th year of Emperor Jianwu of Later Han (42 A.D.). However, rather than marking the actual beginning of Kaya, this date appears to have been fabricated in order to embellish Silla's own history.⁵⁴

From an archeological perspective, the fact that a statelet was founded

in the Kimhae area in the 2nd century A.D. is supported by the evidence uncovered in Yangdongni Tomb #162 in Kimhae, an outer-coffin tomb from which many iron weapons have been excavated.⁵⁵ From that point onwards, the Kaya statelet (Kūmgwan Kaya) in Kimhae appears to have established a confederation (early stages of the Kaya Confederacy) in conjunction with the surrounding statelets; however, as Kaya was not much stronger than its neighbors, its leadership within the confederation remained unstable. This is evidenced by the fact that the second most powerful statelet within the confederation, the Alla (安羅國) statelet in Haman, also exercised significant influence.⁵⁶



Source: Kimhae National Museum, 1998, *Kimhae National Museum*, p. 68, Picture 85

<Picture 12> Bronze kettle-Taesongdong Tomb # 29, Kimhae

The inhabitants of the Kimhae area only began to exercise supreme leadership within the Kaya Confederacy at the end of the 3rd century. It was during this period that the center of Kaya shifted to what is now the downtown area of Kimhae, with Taesongdong Tomb #29 representing the first example of the tombs produced after this relocation.⁵⁷ (<Picture 12>) This ancient tomb is a large-scale outer-coffin tomb which contained a large number of hard pottery pieces, as well as the bodies of slaves which had been buried alive with their master (as part of the so-called practice of ‘*sunjang*’).⁵⁸ The tomb also contained other elements of northern culture such as iron kettles, iron armor and helmets, as well as equestrian harnesses. All of the evidence uncovered from this tomb point to the fact

that its owner was a wealthy and powerful individual. Such elements of northern culture began to appear from the latter half of the 2nd century onwards as Kaya began to trade with the residents of the northwestern area of the Korean peninsula. However, as a result of the external shock which affected Northeast Asia during this period, with northern China at the center, a glut was created in terms of this northern influence on Kaya during the late 3rd and early 4th centuries.⁵⁹

However, Koguryŏ's victory over the Lo-lang and Daifang Commanderies in the early 4th century had a significant effect on the leadership of Kaya, as the latter's development was in large-part based on trade with Lo-lang and Daifang. Subsequently, internal struggles emerged within the Kaya Confederacy, with Kaya divided into a Western Kaya led by Alla of Haman and an Eastern Kaya centered around Kimhae.⁶⁰ As the collapse of Daifang essentially spelled the end of the traditional Daifang-Kaya-Japan trading route, Eastern Kaya found itself with no other choice but to concentrate on trade with the Japanese. This fact is supported by the discovery of Japanese-style spiral-patterned bronze implements in Taesŏngdong Tombs #2, 13 and 23 in Kimhae, all of which were built during the latter half of the 4th century. (<Picture 13>)



Source: Kyŏngsŏng University Museum, 2000, *Ancient Tomb Site I in Taesŏngdong*, p. 41,

Picture 120

<Picture 13> Spiral-patterned bronze implements-Taesŏngdong Tomb # 13, Kimhae

During this period, King Kūnch'ogo of Paekche began to trade with Kaya.⁶¹ In this regard, Paekche's southward trade was designed to set the table for the eventual war with Koguryō which began in 369 A.D. The ability to serve as an intermediary between Paekche and Wa made it possible for the Kaya Confederation to once again achieve a high degree of integration and development. Kaya's ability to act as an intermediary did not stem solely from its strategic geopolitical location between Paekche and Wa, but also from its wealth, and technical and military prowess. The superiority of Kaya is also evidenced by its ability to produce iron, its advanced skills in terms of the production of iron tools and weapons, and by its military power; all of which are in turn evidenced by the large number of iron ingots and iron plate armors excavated from Kimhae Taesōngdong Tomb #2.⁶² (<Picture 14>)



Source: Kimhae National Museum, 1998, *Kimhae National Museum*, p. 73, Picture 93

<Picture 14> Iron ingot-Taesōngdong Tomb # 02, Kimhae

Here, there is a need to take note of the fact that many cavalry-related relics were found in the Kaya-era tombs built in the Kimhae and Pusan area. Although some scholars have argued that the relics uncovered are not traditional cavalry items, the simple fact remains that mounted forces could be found in Kaya, and that some Kaya elites adopted, although not in a systematic or organized fashion, a cavalry-based warfare strategy.⁶³ This development was made possible by the fact that, through Paekche, Kaya remained capable of trading with the inhabitants of what had once

been Daifang in the Hwanghae area, and by its absorption of the refugees created by the wars between Koguryŏ and Paekche.⁶⁴

However, the Kaya Confederacy was destroyed as a result of a combined attack by Silla and Koguryŏ which occurred during the late 4th century to early 5th century. From an archeological standpoint, the fact that the Kaya tombs built in the Kimhae area, which during the 4th century had exhibited Kaya's unique cultural attributes and development patterns, began to shrink in size in the 5th century, with Silla-style pottery also suddenly appearing, reflects the sudden collapse of Kaya power in the Kimhae area and concurrent rise in Silla influence. However, the destruction of the Kaya Confederacy does not mean that all of Kaya's territory was absorbed by Silla; rather Silla's limited ability to establish central control meant that most territories remained unchanged. In addition, the displaced Kaya residents who relocated to the inland areas of Kyŏngsang, which had been relatively unaffected by the war, brought the advanced technologies and culture of Kaya with them. In this regard, the Panp'a (伴跛國) statelet centered around the Koryŏng area, emerged as the main beneficiary of Kaya culture.⁶⁵

As a result of its ability to exploit an iron mine in the Yaromyŏn, Hapch'ŏn-gun area of Kyŏngnam, Panp'a was able to gradually expand its power to the point where by the mid to late 5th century it had renamed itself Kara (or Kaya) and become the dominant power in the former Kaya territory, eventually reorganizing the Kaya Confederacy (Latter Kaya Confederacy).⁶⁶ The Kaya which had Koryŏng at its center, or Greater Kaya (*Tae Kaya*), expanded its influence by opening up new trade routes and capturing areas of eastern Honam such as Namwŏn in Chŏnbuk.⁶⁷ Using this newfound power, Kaya began to once again actively trade with Wa Japan. In addition, in 479 its leader received the title of '*Poguk changgun pon'gukwang* (輔國將軍 本國王)' from the rulers of Southern Qi (南齊) of China in exchange for their tribute.⁶⁸ Thereafter, in 481, Kaya responded favorably to a request for help from Silla to repel the attacking Koguryŏ forces, a task which it successfully achieved.⁶⁹ The relics found in Chisandong Tomb #44 in Koryŏng⁷⁰ help to shed some light on the

situation which prevailed at that time.⁷¹ (<Picture 15>)

However, in the early 6th century Greater Kaya lost control of the eastern parts of Honam to Paekche.⁷² To remedy this situation, Greater Kaya built fortresses along the borders of areas which were under its control. Therefore, Greater Kaya can be said to have established what can be termed the embryonic stages of an ancient state which was based on a confederation system.⁷³ In 522, Greater Kaya, eager to regain its former power, formed an alliance with Silla. However, it soon found itself falling prey to Silla's attempts to divide it, and eventually split into a Northern Kaya Confederacy centered around Greater Kaya in Koryŏng, and a Southern Kaya Confederacy in which Alla (Ara kaya) located in Haman played the dominant role. As a result of concurrent attacks by Silla and Paekche, certain of the regions which had made up the southern realms of Kaya began to fall after 530.⁷⁴ In this regard, the voluntary surrender of the relatively weak statelet of Kūmgwan (or Namgara) situated in Kimhae to Silla stands out as the representative example of this turn of events.

Faced with this national crisis, all of the forces which made up the



Source: photographed by Kim Taesik on April 27, 2002

<Picture 15> Chisangdong Tombs in Koryŏng

Kaya Confederacy met on a daily basis in order to uncover ways of repelling the invasion of Silla and Paekche and of surviving as an independent force; however, having failed to reach a consensus on how to proceed, Kaya voluntarily decided in 550 to place itself under the protection of Paekche. Paekche soon became preoccupied with finding ways of utilizing the Kaya Confederacy to lure the forces of Wa into joining the battle against Silla; however, Paekche's unexpected loss in the battle for Kwansansŏng (presently Okch'ŏn in Ch'ungbuk) in 554 caused some of the individual statelets of the Kaya Confederacy to lose faith in Paekche's ability to protect them, and to defect to the Silla side. For its part, Greater Kaya, the leading force within the confederacy, opted to rally the remaining members to confront Silla in 562; however, the odds firmly against it, it was ultimately destroyed by its more powerful neighbor.⁷⁵

While Kaya culture had been able up to that point to preserve its own unique culture inherited from the days of the early Kaya Confederacy, all of Kaya territory found itself being rapidly absorbed by Silla culture once Greater Kaya was extinguished. This would seem to prove that political changes are usually accompanied by cultural ones.

Viewed in this light, we can surmise that the fact that the Kaya which developed west of the Naktong River was able to maintain its own unique culture for nearly 700 years indicates that it possessed its own political independence.⁷⁶ In other words, Kaya was not a passive entity that was controlled by the Wa or Paekche from 369 to 562 as is advanced by theories such as that of the *Mimana Nihonfu*⁷⁷ or that of the area serving as the headquarters of the Paekche military (百濟軍司令部説),⁷⁸ but rather was an independent entity for 700 years that was eventually absorbed by Silla's culture following its fall to the latter in 562 A.D. The cultural relics of Kaya are solid proof of this fact.

Influence over Ancient Japanese Culture

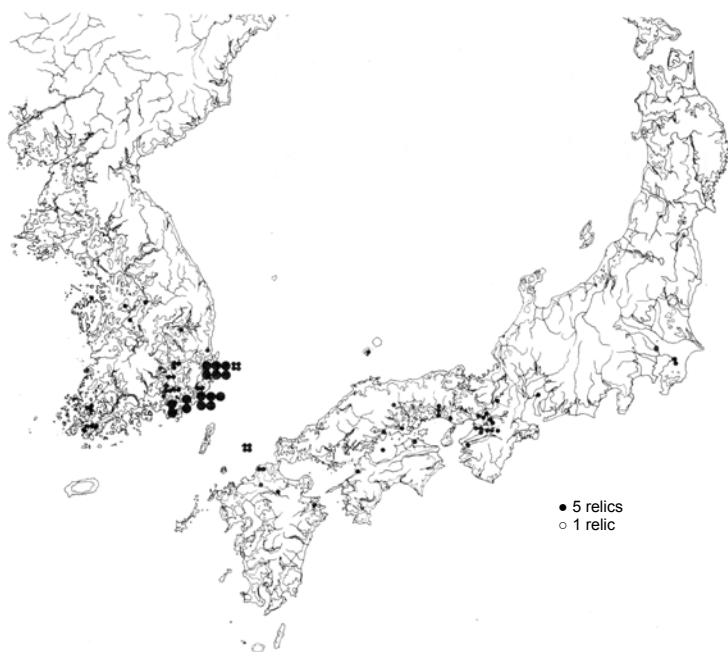
Because of its geographical location as the most convenient site for a marine transportation route with Japan, Kaya was able to maintain close ties with the Japanese throughout its history. A look at Yayoi pottery and its imitations from the 2nd century B.C. to 1st century A.D. which were excavated in the Kimhae area reveals that some Yayoi people who originated from the Kyushu area either migrated to or visited the Kimhae area, and that their traditions were preserved locally by their descendants.⁷⁹ Exchanges with the Japanese during this period were not conducted at the national level, but at the local chiefdom (*kunjang*) or tribal levels. As the main intention of the Yayoi people was to obtain the advanced metal implements developed in the Northeast of the peninsula, and the raw materials to make them, it is assumed that the people of Kaya held the upper hand when it came to trade with the Wa.⁸⁰

From the 2nd century onwards, the main actors in this trade began to change as exchanges began to be managed at the statelet, confederation, or state level. Around the 2nd century, Kaya centered around Kimhae (Kūmgwan Kaya) was the main participant in this trade on the Kaya side, with the Northern Kyushu area playing a similar role on the Japanese side. During this period, Kaya exported iron materials such as flattened axes, as well as the advanced Chinese cultural goods which it had imported from Lo-lang.⁸¹ Meanwhile, based on the fact that Yayoi pottery and related imitations have been excavated from the Pusan and Kimhae areas, we can surmise that Yayoi people either temporarily or permanently migrated to these areas.⁸² While further research on this topic is needed, the location of the areas in which Yayoi pottery has been excavated would seem to suggest that Kūmgwan Kaya imported the labor, that is slaves(生口) it needed to carry out various activities such as iron production and agriculture from Japan.⁸³ It was because of such individuals who were utilized to develop an industrial basis that the people of Kaya were able to lead comfortable lives.

In the 3rd century, the extent of the regions of Japan which traded with Kaya expanded to include not only Northern Kyushu but also the Sanin and Sanyo regions;⁸⁴ thereafter, in the mid 3rd century, Kaya began to conduct trade with Yamatai (邪馬台國), which was then the leading force within a confederation that emerged in the Kinai region. This is evidenced by an entry in the Tongi section of the *Wei shu* (魏書, Book of Wei) in the <*Sanguozhi* (三國志, *History of the Three Kingdoms*)> dealing with Japan (倭人條) that describes a marine trade route that connected Daifang to Yamatai. While the nature of the items which were exported and imported remained relatively unchanged from the 2nd century, the scale of the exchanges conducted with the inland confederated statelets of Yamatai must have been enormous in comparison. However, the destruction of the Wei (魏), who had been the main force behind trade with Yamatai, in the second half of the 3rd century meant that a large confederacy was no longer needed by the latter, and exchanges began to once again be carried out on a smaller scale.

As such, Kaya and Japan were long engaged in a close relationship that was based on the iron trade. The production of iron in Japan was more than 500 years behind that of the Korean peninsula, and until the late 5th century no iron was produced in Japan at all. As such, Wa produced their iron wares by importing iron materials such as flattened axes and iron ingots from Kaya and melting them down to form new wares.⁸⁵ (<Picture 16>) While it is not clear what the Kaya centered around Kimhae imported in exchange for iron, the early 4th century Hajiki (土師器, soft pottery) produced in the Northern Kyushu and Sanin regions which was excavated in the Kimhae and Pusan areas can be regarded as having been carried over by the first generation of Japanese which came across as labor for Kaya.⁸⁶

During the late 4th century, Paekche took advantage of Koguryō's temporary weakness to seize the territory of the former Daifang Commandery. Moreover, Paekche also began to trade with Eastern Chin (東晉) and established a trade relationship with Kaya. This turn of events resulted in the reunification of the Kaya Confederacy under the leadership



Source: Azuma Ushio, 1999, *Iron-culture in Ancient East Asia and Yamato*, Hiroshima: Keisuisha, p. 210, Picture 60

<Picture 16> Distribution of iron ingots

of Kūmgwan Kaya, and in its establishment of a close trade relationship with the Japanese. During this period, the main recipient of Kaya iron was the Kawachi group which had its origins in the western part of the Kinai region from which Yamato (大和) had sprung.

Although Paekche managed to retain the upper hand in its wars with Koguryō from 360's to the 380's, the tide of war was altered in the 390's when King Kwanggaet'o came to the throne of Koguryō. Faced with a serious crisis, Paekche turned to Kaya for help, and also directly requested assistance from Wa. The Japanese weapons system at this time consisted mainly of short iron daggers and thin iron arrowheads⁸⁷ that were not only inferior to Koguryō's armed cavalry⁸⁸ but also beneath

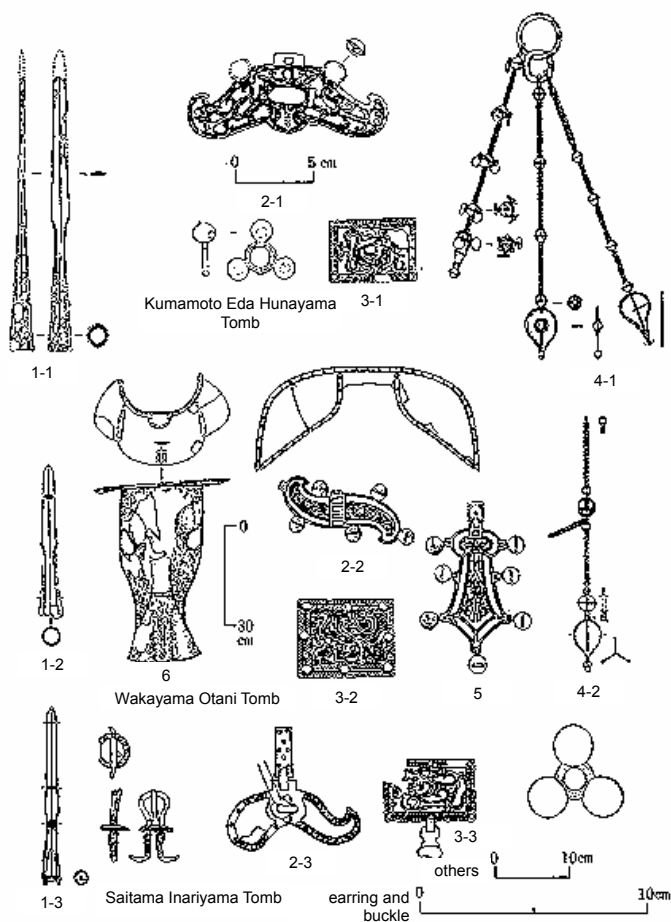


Source: Kimhae National Museum, 1998, *Kimhae National Museum*, p. 66, Picture 82

<Picture 17> Iron body armor-T'oeraeri, Kimhae

Kaya's diamond-shaped iron spears and iron plate armors.⁸⁹ (<Picture 17>) Given their inferior weaponry, it is highly likely that the Japanese army was incorporated into the campaign as a subdivision of Kaya or Paekche's army.⁹⁰

Therefore, Kaya needed to provide support to the Japanese army if the latter was to be of any assistance in battle. This was carried out through such means as the provision of experts on hard pottery, iron tools and armor. During the late 4th century, Kaya's ability to produce the military equipment, even for such advanced strategies as those based on armed cavalry, was far superior to that of Japan. In accordance with this reality, Kaya, desiring to use the Japanese forces as its rearguard, dispatched experts to the area to oversee its development as a rear base. The rising powers in the Kawachi region, seeing this as an opportunity to strengthen their military capacity and take advantage of the economic and technological support provided by Kaya, agreed to dispatch their military forces.⁹¹ However, because the weaponry of the Japanese military was considerably inferior to not only that of Koguryō but also Kaya, its support proved to be of little assistance in the ensuing rout at the hands of Koguryō, a war which sent Paekche and Kaya into rapid decline. It would



1-1.2.3 Octagonal-shaped iron spear

3-1.2.3 Dragon- patterned belt buckle

5- Rhomboid-shaped horse strap pendant

2-1.2.3 S-shaped bridle

4-1.2. Wild gardenia-shaped earring

6- Horse helmet

Source: Pak Ch'önsu, 2002, "The interrelationship between the ancient Korean peninsula and Japan as viewed through archeological materials", *Han'guk kodaesa yön'gu*, vol. 27, Seoul: Han'guk kodaesa sahakhoe, p. 95, Picture 9

<Picture 18> Kaya-style goods excavated from Japanese tombs

be no overstatement to say that Kūmgwan Kaya was for all intent and purpose destroyed during this period.

As the main power which had previously exported iron and advanced culture to Japan had all but been wiped out by the early part of the 5th century, smaller Kaya statelets in Haman and Kosōng began to attempt to establish small-scale exchanges with Japan. However, the event which had the greatest influence on Japan during this period was the wide-scale migration of skilled refugees from Kūmgwan Kaya to Japan. From that point on, a variety of advanced skills, including *Sueki* (須惠器), weaving, levee-making, and metal processing, began to be conveyed to Japan.⁹²

Koryōng-based Greater Kaya assumed the pivotal role in the trade with the Japanese following the reintegration of Kaya under its leadership during the latter part of the 5th century.⁹³ Greater Kaya also traded with smaller powers in various regions of Japan, including Yamato; exported iron ingots and other goods such as accessories and harnesses; and imported Wa people to be used as soldiers. (<Picture 18>) While horse breeders were dispatched to Japan as part of Kaya's assistance to the Japanese military, it is highly unlikely that the Japanese had an armed cavalry during this period when we consider the state of Greater Kaya forces at that time. Moreover, it was more popular in Japan during the 6th century to produce decorative horse accessories than actual military equipment.⁹⁴ In addition, although Japan began to produce its own iron in the late 5th century, there are some who have argued that Japan did not inherit these production skills from Greater Kaya, but rather from other Kaya statelets or even Paekche statelets from the Yōngsan River area.⁹⁵

While Greater Kaya had been actively engaged in trade with Japan until the first half of the 6th century, by the mid-6th century it was Paekche who was trading with Wa. Paekche's main trading partner in Japan at the time was the Yamato kingdom based in Nara. As part of its efforts to disseminate its advanced skills to Japan, Paekche dispatched specialists in the Chinese Classics (*okyōng paksā*), monks, and technicians, demanding soldiers for the fight against Silla in return.⁹⁶ The Yamato kingdom, which placed great importance on the ability to gain access to Paekche's

advanced culture, eventually abandoned Kaya and traded exclusively with Paekche. This curtailment of the traditional trade relationship proved to be one of the defining causes of Kaya's downfall.

As mentioned above, from the 2nd century onwards, Kaya profited greatly from its leading role in the iron-based trade with Japan; meanwhile, the iron culture which Japan received from Kaya proved to be a crucial element in the establishment of ancient Japanese civilization. Furthermore, certain elements of Kaya's culture, such as its Sueki pottery, its accessories, and harnesses, were accepted in Japan with little to no alteration. However, the onset of Paekche's direct trade with Japan in the first half of the 6th century meant that Paekche, armed with its advanced Confucian and Buddhist culture, was able to supplant Kaya as the main patron of the development of Japanese civilization. The main point in this regard is that the process of the transmission of Kaya culture to Wa Japan was not a passive one as argued by the proponents of the so-called 'Mimana control theory', but rather the product of peaceful intercourses between Kaya and Japan that were based on economic exchanges and a relationship between equals.

Driving Force behind Silla's Unification of the Three Kingdoms

As a result of its forging of an opportune alliance with Tang, Silla was able to conquer Paekche in 660 A.D. (7th year of King Muyōl's reign) and Koguryō in 668 A.D. (8th year of King Munmu's reign), before completing the unification of the Korean peninsula by driving out the Tang army in 676 (the 16th year of King Munmu's reign). As such, although Silla had originally received assistance from Tang, it eventually turned on Tang to achieve unification. While this unification was one of the most important events in the history of Korea, little is ever mentioned about the role of individuals from Kaya in this process.

While the general who directed the 50,000 Silla soldiers who took part

in the final victory over Paekche was Kim Yusin, Kim Inmun, who was King Munmu's brother, and Kim Hŭmsun, Kim Yusin's brother, were the generals that led the 70,000 soldiers who took part in the defeat of Koguryŏ. At the end of the war in 668 King Munmu awarded Kim Yusin with the position of *T'aedaegakgan* (太大角干), the highest official position ever bestowed upon anyone in the history of Silla.⁹⁷ King Sinmun is said to have told a Tang envoy dispatched by Zhong Zong (中宗) of Tang to pressure Silla to remove the posthumous title of 'T'aejong' bestowed upon King T'aejongmuyŏl the following: "The previous king, Ch'unch'u, was a benevolent leader who had a munificent servant named Kim Yusin. Together, these two worked tirelessly to unify Samhan, and no one can undermine his accomplishments".⁹⁸ In addition, the people of Silla believed that Kim Yusin was one of the thirty-three heavenly gods who had descended to earth, and that he had subsequently become a meritorious subject of Silla who after his death protected Samhan along with King Munmu, who was believed to have become the great dragon of the East Sea.⁹⁹ This belief remained largely unchanged, as evidenced by the fact that King Hŭngdŏk of latter Silla (r. 826-836) bestowed the honorable title of *Hŭngmu taewang* (興武大王) upon Kim Yusin.

Therefore, there is little doubt that Kim Yusin was the general who made the most significant contribution to Silla's unification of the Three Kingdoms. However, his great grandfather King Kuhyŏng was the last king of Kŭmgwan Kaya before its surrender to Silla in 532,¹⁰⁰ and his grandfather, Kim Muryŏk eventually became the military commander (*kunju*) of Sinju (now the city of Hanam in Kyŏngi) who killed King Sŏng of Paekche during the battle of Kwansansŏng (now Okch'ŏn in Ch'ungbuk) in 563.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, his father, Kim Sŏhyŏn, was the great Silla general who attacked and conquered Koguryŏ's Nangbisŏng (now the city of Ch'ŏngju in Ch'ungbuk) in 629.¹⁰² As can be seen, Kim Yusin's family, which had been the royal family of Kaya before its surrender, made use of their military acumen to rescue Silla whenever it was in danger, thus making a decisive contribution to Silla's unification of

the Three Kingdoms. Some have argued that the fact that Sukhŭlchong, the father-in-law of Kim Yusin's father and a member of the royal family of Silla, objected to his father's marriage to his daughter, Manmyŏng,¹⁰³ and that Kim Yusin was forced to resort to some chicanery to overcome the perceived opposition of the Silla royal family to his sister's Munmyŏng's marriage to Kim Ch'unch'u (King Muyeŏl) proves that Kim Yusin's family was discriminated against by the aristocracy of Silla because of its status as members of the former royal family of Kaya.¹⁰⁴ However, upon his ascension to the throne King Munmu, most likely at the request of his mother Queen Munmyŏng, ordered that the tomb of King Suro, the founder of Kaya, be repaired and that some land be set aside for ritual services for Suro.¹⁰⁵ This would seem to indicate that Silla recognized Kim Yusin's family as the natural descendants of Kaya. (<Picture 19>)



Source: photographed by Kim Taesik on May 11, 2003

<Picture 19> King Suro's tomb, Kimhae

Another individual who contributed greatly to Silla's unification of the Three Kingdoms was the outstanding diplomat Kang Su. After the war, King Munmu rewarded Kang Su's monumental role in conveying Silla's position to China, Koguryŏ and Paekche by giving him a high official rank and 200 'sum' of grain a year. In particular, the former monarch, King Muryŏl, stated that Kang Su's contribution could not be underestimated in that Silla's victory over Koguryŏ and Paekche had been made possible by the letters written by Kang Su requesting assistance from Tang.¹⁰⁶ Kang Su is assumed to be the author of the *Tapsŏl ingwisŏ* (答薛仁貴書), a famous long essay found in the section of the <Samguk sagi> 's *Silla pon'gi* recounting the events which occurred during the 11th year of King Munmu.

Kang Su is known to have hailed from Chungwŏn'gyŏng (now the city of Ch'ungju) and as one of the first scholars to study Confucianism. Shortly after King T'aejongmuryŏl's ascension to the throne, the new king received an envoy carrying a message from the royal family of Tang. Unable to catch the full meaning of the communiqué, the king called for Kang Su who was able to effectively translate the document after having only looked it over once. The king subsequently ordered him to compose a reply, and was said to have found the writing style to be both eloquent and appropriate.¹⁰⁷

Here, the most salient aspect which should be brought to light is the fact that Kang Su responded to the king's inquiry about his name in the following manner: "your servant is from Imnagara (任那加良) and goes by the name of Wudu."¹⁰⁸ Imnagara was a term used to refer to the entire Kaya Confederacy at the time when the Kaya centered around Kimhae was the preeminent power.¹⁰⁹ In 557, Silla established a secondary capital (*sogyŏng*) in Kukwŏn, the former name of Chungwŏn'gyŏng, and in the following year, (the 19th year of King Chinhŭng) proceeded to relocate some of the offspring of the aristocrats to the area, as well as people from the six districts (*yukpu*) to staff the new capital's bureaus. At that time, the former King of Kŭmgwan Kaya, who had surrendered in 532 (the 19th year of King Pŏphŭng), and his descendants were living in the capital area

of Kyŏngju; as such, there is a significant possibility that some of them were also relocated at the time of the establishment of the secondary capital in Kukwŏn.¹¹⁰ The fact that Kang Su identified himself as a person from Imnagara although more than a hundred years after Kaya had been destroyed indicates that he viewed himself as an offspring of Kaya.

Thus, we see that Kaya people contributed to Silla's unification of the Three Kingdoms from both a civilian and military standpoint. From a military standpoint, Kim Yusin's family, the descendants of Kūmgwan Kaya, formed the backbone of Silla's military; meanwhile, from a civilian standpoint, Kang Su, whose ancestors hailed from Imnagara, was the individual responsible for Silla's written communications with China. Although these events unfolded during the Silla era, none of this would have been possible without the advanced culture which Kaya possessed at the time of its destruction a hundred years before.



Source: photographed by Kim Taesik on March 27, 2004

<Picture 20> Kuksadan(The Shrine of Chŏngkyŏn-moju) in Haeinsa temple,
Hapch'ŏn

Meanwhile, Tosölchi, the last king of the Greater Kaya kingdom which collapsed in 562 was in reality the Wölgwang t'aeja,¹¹¹ the offspring of the strategic marriage in 522 of King Ineo of Greater Kaya and the sister of Pijobu, himself a member of the Silla royal family.¹¹² Tosölchi came to Silla as an exile in 550, eventually becoming the commander (*tangju*) of the Ch'umunch'on area (now Kūmsöngmyōn Ŭisönggun, Kyöngbuk) and participating in the battle of Chöksöng (now Tanyang in Ch'ungbuk).

Moreover, he also went on to accompany King Chinhüŋ's royal carriage in his capacity as a Silla's aristocracy *taedüŋ* when the king visited Pisaböl (now Ch'angnyöng in Kyöngnam).¹¹³ These accomplishments enabled him to temporarily ascend to the throne of Kaya following Silla's conquest of Greater Kaya in 562.

To a certain degree, Silla compensated the people of Kaya for these contributions. Thus, King Munmu repaired the tomb of King Suro, the founder of Kūmgwan Kaya, and provided economic support to his descendants. Meanwhile, with the support of Queen Söngmok, who was King Aejang's grandmother, the Monk Sunüŋ, a descendant of King Tosölchi, was able in 802 to establish Haeinsa Temple in Kaya Mountain, which was the site of a shrine to the founder of Greater Kaya, Chöngkyön-moju.¹¹⁴ (<Picture 20>)

Conclusion

The following is a brief summary of the characteristics of Kaya culture delved into above:

The first characteristic of Kaya culture is that it was born as a result of the integration of the agrarian culture of the south with the iron culture of the northwest Korean Peninsula.

The second characteristic of Kaya culture is that its territory acted as the center of maritime trade with Lo-lang, and that this trade became one of the basic characteristics of its culture.

The third characteristic of Kaya culture is that it boasted uniquely neat

and conservative qualities which were unlike anything that developed in Silla, Paekche, or Japan.

The fourth characteristic of Kaya culture is that for about 7 centuries it existed as an independent entity along the western region of the Naktong River.

The fifth characteristic of Kaya culture is that it made significant contributions to the establishment and development of the ancient culture of Japan from the period spanning the 1st century B.C. to the 6th century A.D.

The sixth characteristic of Kaya culture is that in the aftermath of the collapse of Kaya, its people acted as the human resources pool from which the driving force behind Silla's unification of the Three Kingdoms emerged.

The Kaya Confederacy, or Kaya region, was not a weak entity which ancient Japan controlled or interfered with. Rather, although it was not as strong as Koguryō, Paekche or Silla, Kaya, which existed as an independent political entity for over 600 years, was the fourth ancient state on the Korean peninsula. Therefore, ancient Japan did not develop as a result of its rule over the southern part of the Korean peninsula where Kaya was situated, nor was it conquered by horse-riders. These two theories are not based on facts, but fabrications. Ancient Japan developed as a result of its extensive trade with Kaya. Moreover, as the history of Kaya was altered during the development process of Korean ancient history, Japan's ancient history was also affected. In other words, only when the history of Kaya is understood, can the history of ancient Japan be understood.

Key Word: Kaya Federation, Koguryō, Paekche, Silla, Lo-lang, Mimana nihonfu, Ancient Japan.

Notes :

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한국 고대가야 문화의 특징

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최근의 가야 지역에서 활발하게 일어난 고고학적 발굴조사 결과들에 의하여, 가야사에 대한 한국과 일본학계의 연구 성과는 상당히 개선되었다. 그러나 구미제국에서는 가야에 대한 최근 연구 성과들이 거의 반영되어 있지 않아서, 가야에 대한 인식은 전혀 없거나, 있다고 해도 미약한 상태이거나, 혹은 가야에 대한 언급은 없이 일본이 4-6 세기에 한반도 남부를 정복하여 식민지를 건설했다고 서술하고 있다. 그러므로 본고에서는 옛 가야 지역에서 이루어진 근래의 발굴 성과와 가야사에 대한 학계의 최근 연구 성과를 체계적으로 정리하여, 가야 문화의 특징을 간략하게 정리하였다.

가야 문화의 첫 번째 특징은, 이 문화가 남한 농경문화와 서북한 철기문화의 결합에 의하여 탄생하였다는 점이다.

가야 문화의 두 번째 특징은, 이 지역이 낙랑과의 해운 교역의 중심지였으며, 가야는 그러한 교류를 지속적으로 행함으로써 문화의 기본 성격을 확정하였다는 점이다.

가야 문화의 세 번째 특징은, 이 문화가 신라, 백제, 왜 등의 문화와 구분되는 독자적인 문화로서 단정하고 보수적인 성격을 띠는 점이다.

가야 문화의 네 번째 특징은, 이 문화가 낙동강 서쪽 지역을 중심으로 하여 약 7세기에 걸쳐 독립적으로 지속되었다는 점이다.

가야 문화의 다섯 번째 특징은, 이 문화가 기원 전후 시기부터 서기 6세기까지 일본 고대 문화의 성립과 발전에 크게 기여하였다는 점이다.

가야 문화의 여섯 번째 특징은 가야 멸망 후 그들의 인맥과 힘이 신라에 합쳐져 삼국 통일의 원동력으로 작용하였다는 점이다.

한국 고대사에서 가야연맹 또는 가야 지역은 고대 일본의 지배나 간섭을 받던 약소국이 아니었고, 고구려, 백제, 신라의 삼국에 비해서는 강하지 않았다고 해도 염연히 600여 년에 걸쳐 정치적 실체를 이루고 있던 제4의 고대국가였던 것이다. 고대 일본은 가야와의 집중적인 교류를 통해 발전한 것이며, 가야사는 한국 고대사의 전개 과정에 연루되어 변동하였기 때문에, 일본 고대사도 그 영향을 받았을 뿐이다. 즉 가야사를 알

이야 일본 고대사도 제대로 이해할 수 있게 되는 것이다.

주제어: 가야연맹, 고구려, 백제, 신라, 낙랑, 임나일본부, 고대 일본